(d) to (f) The phase I of the project was awarded to M/s. Marine and Communication Electronics (MACE) Ltd., Visakhapatnam, a Public Sector undertaking of Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, during the 8th Five-year plan period. Two shore stations were established in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu & Andhra Pradesh and one in Goa and they started functioning in 1994-95. The Walkie-Talkie sets were also distributed to the fishermen.

As the M/s. MACE has been wound up, in the phase II of the project was awarded to M/s. Punjab Wireless System Ltd. (PUNWIRE) during the IXth Five Year Plan period. Seven shore stations to be located in West Bengal, Orissa, Pondicherry, Goa, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands were to be set up. PUNWIRE could not complete the work due to financial problems and this work has been now assigned to the Society for Applied Microwave Electronics Engineering and Research (SAMEER)—Centre for Electromagnetics under the Ministry of Information Technology. A discussion is under progress with States Government for identification of fishermen for distribution of the Walkie-Talkies.

In the Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Island the Port Management Board has taken the responsibility for implementing this project. The System have been handed over to A & N Administration on 08.01.2001. Walkie-Talkie also been handed over to A & N Administration for distribution to fishermen.

The time taken for implementation of the programme is mainly due to closure/financial problems of two Public Sectors firms who were involved in the programme.

Bunglings in sale of railway tickets

†4756. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether it is a fact that on the one hand a lot of bunglings are prevalent in the sale of rail tickets and the rail reservation on the other hand the incidents of theft and looting in trains are incessantly on the increase;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the consecutive details thereof;

(c) whether the Railways have been unable to do anything so far in the face of the increasing number of trains passengers day by day; and

(d) if so, whether Government would provide any planned, assured/convenient facilities for the betterment of the rail traffic and safe journey, in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. It is not a fact that a lot of bunglings are prevalent in the sale of rail tickets and rail reservation. However, during checks, some cases of irregularities in booking and reservation have been detected. With regard to the incidents of theft and looting in trains, as per information available with this Ministry, crime including robbery has increased during the year 2001. However, "Policing" being a State Subject, prevention and detection, of crime on Railways including running trains is the Constitutional responsibility of the State Governments.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. Railways have by and large been able to cope with the increased passenger traffic. Special trains and additional coaches are run during rush periods. Some of the facilities provided by the Railways to the travelling public are tatkal reservation service, escorting of trains by Govt. Railway Police/Railway Protection Force etc. Regular/surprise checks are also conducted to prevent malpractices and suitable action is taken against persons found at fault.

Projects of Konkan Railway Corporation in Iraq

4757. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Konkan Railway Corporation has signed an agreement with Iraq for carrying out project works;

(b) whether some of these projects were expected to commence after the contract was signed;

(c) whether the contract was signed in December, 2001;